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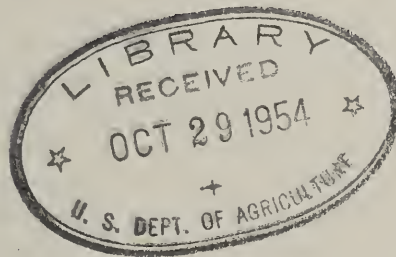


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THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION  
IN A STATE EXTENSION SERVICE

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The Extension Service of Oregon State College is an educational agency with a professional staff of approximately 200 people. More than half of these workers are permanently stationed in county offices throughout the State. The remainder are located on the campus of the College at Corvallis. The central staff workers include administrative and supervisory personnel and subject matter specialists, whose function is to assist county workers to make their educational activities more effective.

The pattern of organization is similar to that in many other State Extension Services, the significant feature being three specialized lines of work. Each of these specialties serves a different major purpose, and each of them also deals with a different clientele. Yet in a larger sense all three of the specialties contribute to a common purpose and all of them serve a common clientele.

The problem facing the administrative head of this agency is how to achieve greater coordination of effort between these three specialized groups of personnel. Steps toward integration have met resistance within the staff. This paper presents an analysis of the reasons for such resistance and proposes steps for the solution of the problem. The ideas presented have been drawn from readings in the fields of psychology, sociology, and public administration.

The writer owes a particular debt of gratitude to Cyril O. Houle, L. D. White, Charles M. Hardin, Herbert Thelen, and Edward A. Shils of the University of Chicago staff for their advice and counsel on the manner of approaching this problem and for their suggestions for readings.

The writer of this paper has been a member of the staff of the Oregon Extension Service for seven years, and his data concerning that agency are drawn from personal observation.

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1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the problem and the objectives of the research.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methods used in the study. It includes a discussion of the experimental design, the data collection procedures, and the statistical analysis techniques.

3. The third part of the report is a presentation of the results of the study. It includes a discussion of the findings, a comparison of the results with previous research, and a conclusion about the significance of the study.

4. The fourth part of the report is a discussion of the implications of the study. It includes a discussion of the limitations of the study, the strengths of the findings, and the potential for future research.

## THE SITUATION AND THE PROBLEM

A Federal law in 1914 created the Extension Service and specified its job as being to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics--and to encourage the application of the same.

To carry out the purposes of this act, each of the 48 States and the Territories of Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico has organized and operated a specialized unit of its land-grant college. The Extension Service of Oregon State College has been one of the highly successful organizations of this kind. One evidence is the fact that more than 80 percent of its present budget is provided by State and local appropriations, and less than 20 percent from the Federal Government. If the Oregon Extension Service were not highly regarded by the people it serves, it would not be so liberally supported by them. Extension agents are located in every county of the State and there is ample evidence that their teachings have been effective in influencing the development of agriculture and rural living throughout the State.

The Oregon organization is similar to that in many other States. Its foundation is the work of the county Extension agents. Specialists, supervisors, and administrative personnel aid in making the work in the counties more effective. Most of the educational activities of the organization are carried on through three programs that are to a considerable degree separate. Two of these programs date from the beginning of Extension work and the third was started during the first World War. This three-part pattern is evident in staff organization as well as in program.

The three lines of work are: (1) agricultural education for adult rural men; (2) home economics education for adult rural women; and (3) 4-H Club work for rural youth of both sexes and dealing with both agricultural and home economics subjects.

There is a single headquarters office to which all three lines of work are responsible. It is headed by an Associate Director who has four assistants. Duties of these Assistant Directors are divided on a functional basis, one being in charge of county personnel and budgets, a second handling liaison with a large number of State and Federal agencies and private organizations, the third (a woman) directing certain projects in the field of the social sciences and also giving leadership to in-service training activities for personnel, and the fourth being designated as (educational) program coordinator.

The agricultural phase of the work is represented by one or more men agents in each of the 36 counties of the State, and they have available the assistance of specialists in a variety of subject matter fields who



travel from the State headquarters at the College in Corvallis. Administration of this phase of the work represents part of the function of two of the Assistant Directors of Extension and two State Agents.

The home economics program is represented by one or more women agents in each of 30 counties. There are women specialists in various subject matter fields. Administration of this phase of the program is handled by a State Home Demonstration Leader, assisted by two State Agents.

The Youth program of 4-H Club work is represented by one or more full-time agents in 27 counties and two cities, plus part time duties of agents in the remaining counties. Administration of this program is handled by a State Club Leader, assisted by three State Agents.

In all counties having two or more agents, one person has been designated as chairman of the county staff. This usually is an agricultural agent, but not in all cases. In all counties except three, the agents of the three lines of work are officed together in a suite of rooms and have a common reception room for visitors. In more than half of the counties they share a common budget rather than having separate budgets for the three lines of work as once was the practice.

There are many obvious advantages in this pattern of organization which focuses the attention of specialized personnel upon specialized problems. It is logical that educational work in agriculture be done by men who are graduates of agricultural schools, while home economics education is done by women who are graduates of schools of home economics. The two would seem to have little in common. Youth work, on the other hand, requires certain specialized interests and abilities that are not necessarily found in people well qualified to do educational work with adults. Specialization in one of these three lines permits developing a higher degree of competence in a staff member than would be possible if that person were required to command a broader range of technical knowledge. Specialization in function permits the local employee to give more frequent and individualized service to the leaders with whom he or she works, and specialization among supervisory personnel facilitates maximum contribution to the development of local personnel in the field which they serve.

The problem that stems from this specialization, however, is how to integrate the efforts of the staff in support of common objectives. There appears to be within each of the specialized lines an inherent resistance to such integration. There is difficulty in establishing common purposes and goals for all personnel that will transcend specialized loyalties. To a considerable degree, each of the three fields of agriculture, home economics, and 4-H Club work has become a "collectivity" which has a strong attraction for the loyalty of its members, and the identification of the employee with this "collectivity" limits some desirable developments in Extension work as a whole.

Integration of effort would make for better service to the people of the State by increasing accomplishments within each of the three specialized

fields and by initiating progress in new fields. Specifically, the effect would be to increase exchange of effort between personnel of different specialized lines, increase combined activities involving two or more lines, increase use of outside resources not affiliated with the specialized lines, reduce competition for control of new activities, and facilitate introduction of new programs that do not fit the present pattern.

There is no legal or organic barrier to integration now. But the idea meets numerous objections among the staff, for reasons indicate in the next section.

### CAUSES OF NON-INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

There are several factors that have contributed to developing the strong attachment between the individual employee and the phase of the work in which he or she is engaged, and that have tended to accentuate the divisions between the three lines. One is the sex difference between agricultural and home economics personnel, which is associated with differences in the nature of their work and the clientele they serve. Some of the women apparently feel that the men have little interest in the work being done with women and regard it as less important and less valuable than the work being done with men. This sense of discrimination generates a striving to maintain the independence of the home economics program as a means of self-protection and self-assertion. Some of the men would hesitate to take an active part in activities of groups of women even if offered the opportunity for doing so, because such association might be regarded as unmanly or "sissified."

Both men and women dealing with adults may feel that it would be beneath their dignity to be associated with 4-H activities of "kids." Certainly there is an apparent reluctance on the part of some staff members to taking an active part in 4-H functions.

To a considerable extent, each of the three types of agents deals with a different clientele although they may in many instances be serving different members of the same family. The agents are thus subjected to diverse pressures.

There is considerable difference in both subject matter and procedure among the three lines of work. For example, home economics education is carried on primarily through community organizations of women that meet at monthly intervals and the program is planned and scheduled approximately one year in advance. Agricultural work, on the other hand, is not carried out through teaching standard lessons to organizations that meet at regular intervals, and the work is seldom scheduled far in advance because of the unpredictable hazards of weather, pests, and markets.



Instead, a larger share of agricultural teaching is done through farm visits, public meetings and tours on particular topics, news stories and radio broadcasts, talks at commodity association meetings, etc. Emphasis in the agricultural program may vary greatly from one community to another within the county, whereas the teaching in home economics is more likely to be similar throughout the county.

Prevailing systems of progress reports and publicity tend to emphasize accomplishments in each of the specialized fields rather than mutual contributions to common goals.

The educational activities which predominate in most county Extension programs are of types which are readily performed by specialized agents dealing with specialized groups. Those tasks which require integrated effort have seldom been seriously undertaken.

The pattern of staff organization establishes a line of authority from a State leader in each of two of the specialized lines of work through supervisory personnel to individual agents in those two lines in the county. Agricultural work, the third phase, does not have a designated "State leader" but one of the Assistant Directors of Extension is obviously regarded by many of the staff as filling that function. Supervision carried out under his direction is regarded as "agricultural," though the work involved may often deal with consolidated county budgets and other items of general concern to county staffs. In a general sense, this pattern of organization means that the professional advancement of home economics personnel (both agents and specialists) is determined almost entirely by the Home Demonstration Leader and her assistants; 4-H Club personnel by the State Club Leader and his assistants; and agricultural agents by an Assistant Director and his aides. Significantly, the designated chairman of a county staff has no responsibilities concerning the salaries to be paid the members of that staff and normally is not asked for his or her advice before such decisions are made.

As a result, the salary of an individual agent is measured against that of agents doing the same type of work in other counties rather than against that of agents doing different work in the same county. If the pay scales in the three lines of work are kept on a comparable basis, the resulting salaries will be fair. However, agricultural agent salaries average somewhat higher than those of the other two lines, and it is not evident that all agents attribute this to the longer period of service that these men have attained.

A related circumstance is that the Extension Service in this State is headed by a man with an agricultural background; it is known that all other States also have male directors with agricultural training; and it also is known that there never has been a woman director in any State. Therefore, the impression readily arises that agricultural work is considered to be more important than either of the other two specialties.

The name "Extension Service" is in itself a factor affecting employee loyalties because the name does not readily signify the nature of the work of this agency. If the name connotes anything to the average layman, the connotation is likely to be that of correspondence study. On the other hand, "4-H Club Work" is widely and favorably known, and "county agricultural agent" or "home economics agent" is more readily understood by lay groups than "County Extension agent."

There is basically a difference in the objectives of major concern to agricultural workers as contrasted with the other two groups. Emphasis in agricultural education rests upon efficient production and intelligent marketing. The goal is greater profit for the farm operator. In both home economics and 4-H Club work, however, emphasis is primarily upon education for human happiness and human well being. The profit motive is not the primary appeal.

All of these factors are involved in a pattern of operation that has continued for a considerable time. New personnel are trained for their jobs by people whose background of experience has been in a specialized field. And they are supervised by people whose experience likewise has been largely in one of the three specialized fields. The local citizens whom they serve are accustomed to services rendered on the specialized-field basis and expect the work to be continued on that basis.

The combined effect of all these factors over a period of time has been to build up certain group value-standards in each of the three specialized lines of Extension work. And the usual staff member acquires through experience an identification with the values of the particular group in which he or she is employed. The employee also acquires an identification with the Extension Service as a whole, but it is not so strong as that with the specialized group. In case of conflicting loyalties, the demands of the specialized group are likely to be dominant.



## OBJECTIVES OF INTEGRATION

In view of the obvious difficulties in store, why suggest integration at all? Why not simply continue the present successful development along three largely separated lines?

The need for integration is apparent in the nature of the Extension task. At the point of application, the three phases of education are intimately inter-related. In the field of agriculture, for example, the job is one of spreading information and encouraging its use. Farms are family businesses. Commitments of capital require decisions that involve the wife as well as the husband. Expenditures in connection with a new practice in operating the farm may be in direct competition with expenditures for improvements around the home or for various family obligations, and the reverse is equally true. The standard of living to which the family can aspire must somehow be fitted to the income-producing potential of the farm on which the family depends. And the development of the agricultural enterprises on the farm must take into account both the needs and interests of the family as well as the factors of climate, soil, and markets.

The fact is well established that successful participation by children in 4-H Club work is greatly aided by the interest that parents show in the projects of their children and the support that parents give to activities of clubs to which their children belong. It also is well known that the enrollment of a child in a 4-H Club may often be the first step in a process that leads to arousing the interest of the parents in improved farming and homemaking.

Attempts to improve rural community facilities and rural life necessarily require the interest and participation of both men and women to be successful. Roads, schools, recreational programs, hospital improvement, and the organization of prepayment plans for medical and hospital service provide examples.

These basic common interests offer Extension personnel opportunities for combined activities. The following are a few examples:

1. Farm tours which emphasize "home" as well as "farm" and are planned for family groups rather than for men alone.
2. Soil conservation tours for women, with agricultural agents serving as guides and speakers.
3. Inclusion of appropriate agricultural subjects in the study program of community home economics units in addition to the home economics subjects with which these units are primarily concerned. (Possible topics would be such items as farm record keeping, soil conservation principles, farm management principles.)
4. Presentation of joint radio programs by the three types of agents planned for a family audience rather than individual programs for specialized audiences.
5. Inclusion of home economics subjects on the program of agricultural meetings where such subjects have an obviously appropriate relationship. (Examples here might be to bring in human nutrition on a dairy program, emphasizing the



nutritional values of dairy products, etc.; having a demonstration of safety factors in men's work clothing as a feature of an agricultural engineering meeting dealing with farm machinery; inclusion of a demonstration on home lighting as a feature of an agricultural program.)

6. Teamwork approach by agents in servicing individual farmers desiring management advice.

7. Promotion of 4-H Club work through appropriate demonstrations and displays at both agricultural and home economics events for adults.

8. Collaboration by all three types of agents in the recruitment and training of 4-H Club leaders.

From the viewpoint of Extension administrators, the advantages of integration are well summarized in the report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. This report states that "Grouping Extension educational activities within a single Extension program more definitely meets conditions of the present and the foreseeable future than does continued emphasis upon departmentalization within the Cooperative Extension Service."

The report further states: "It seems apparent that the unified program includes the following advantages:

"1. It encourages joint support from many 'publics' for the Extension program rather than competition for support of various segments.

"2. It ties each public to the over-all Extension undertaking rather than to a separated segment that may not be identified with the whole.

"3. It facilitates using all resources of personnel and knowledge in meeting the needs of any one public.

"4. It permits a family approach in Extension teaching.

"5. It establishes a sounder basis for staff organization in the county.

"6. It promotes efficiency in the use of personnel, and should reduce duplicating or overlapping activities.

"7. It permits increased accomplishment by focusing concerted effort on major objectives." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, p. 2 November, 1952 (multilithed).

### Steps Already Taken

During the last seven years, the administrative head of the Oregon Extension Service has taken an impressive list of steps to promote program integration. Among them are the following:

1. Establishment of county planning councils (coordinated lay advisory groups).
2. Requiring weekly staff meetings in each county having several agents.
3. Changing titles of county staff members so that all are now labeled "county Extension agents" rather than "agricultural agent," "home Demonstration agent," or "4-H Club agent."
4. Designating a chairman of the staff in each county having several agents.
5. Establishing combined county budgets to replace separate budgets for each of the three lines of work.
6. Designating an Assistant Director in charge of all county personnel and budgets and requiring that all new appointments of county staff be cleared through him.
7. Appointing a woman Assistant Director, with responsibilities for several projects involving coordinated activities.
8. Holding monthly meetings of the entire central staff, including all administrative and supervisory personnel and specialists.
9. Informing the entire staff simultaneously on policy developments, new program undertakings, personnel appointments, resignations, leaves, and similar matters by means of a newsletter.
10. Holding at least two series of district meetings for all county staff members annually, concerned with program planning and other items of mutual interest.
11. Holding a State agricultural conference dealing with problems and opportunities in all areas of farming and rural living and involving the active aid of all members of the central staff and numerous county personnel in servicing committees of more than 400 lay leaders.

During this period also, retirements necessitated changes in leadership in both 4-H Club work and home economics work in the State headquarters, and there have been substantial changes in the county staffs in all three lines of work both through replacements and through the addition of new positions.

Substantial progress can be seen. But the problem of three unintegrated organizations still exists, and resistance to integration still is apparent.



## RESISTANCE TO INTEGRATION

The fact that resistance to integration exists is not surprising. Integration represents change, and resistance to change is normal in an institution of this kind.

The types of program coordination suggested often involve changes in the role of the individual employee; changes in the power relationships of the various individuals; changes in values and beliefs as to what is desirable; changes in methods of teaching (with the new methods sometimes being more complex and more difficult than the old); and changes in the communication pattern in the organization.

Such changes tend to upset an established pattern of expectations and procedure and give rise to feelings of insecurity in the individual staff members affected.

Typical expressions of resistance include:

1. Professing not to understand the new idea that is being suggested.
2. Marshalling arguments as to why the new idea will not work.
3. Postponing action to implement the new idea.
4. Attempting to show that the new idea already is being accomplished within the present pattern.
5. Attempting to shift responsibility to somebody else to figure out how the new idea should be applied.
6. Blaming somebody else for the situation that made the new idea necessary, or expressing hostility in other ways.

It is significant, however, that changes that can be accomplished within a single specialized line of work meet less resistance than those requiring integrated activity of two or more lines. This suggests that there is a group factor operating in opposition to such changes. In fact, such a group factor seems to be exerting continuous pressure toward less integration than already exists. Each of the three specialized lines of work appears to seek opportunities to develop into a self-contained unit.

Numerous writings in the field of public administration indicate that a similar phenomenon often is seen in government agencies. Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson comment that units with a high degree of self-containment often have an organization goal that is thought of by many people as a worthwhile activity in its own right--not just as a means to some more general goal.<sup>2</sup> The comment seems

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert Simon, Donald W. Smithburg, and Victor A. Thompson, Public Administration, p. 268. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.

particularly pertinent to the Extension Service situation, as it is evident that each of the three specialized phases of work is considered by many people to be a worthwhile activity in its own right.

Associated with this tendency for each of the three specialized phases of Extension work to become a self-contained unit is a tendency for employee loyalties to be more strongly attached to the specialized unit than to the larger organization of which it is a part. This "identification" of the employee with the group of which he or she is a part appears to be the source of the group factor previously mentioned as an obstacle to integration.

It thus appears that resistance to integration in the Extension Service represents not only resistance to change but also the expression of certain group forces that are in direct opposition to integration. And the problem of overcoming resistance to integration becomes one of broadening employee identifications where these are a problem as well as introducing innovations in such a manner as to minimize the inevitable resistance to change itself.



## THE NATURE OF IDENTIFICATION

The term "identification" as used in this paper refers to a phenomenon that has been mentioned by writers in both psychology and public administration. Simon defines it by saying that "a person identifies himself with a group when, in making a decision, he evaluates the several alternatives of choice in terms of their consequences for the specified group."<sup>3</sup>

That definition omits mention of two characteristics of identification that appear significant on the basis of Oregon observations. One is the fact that identification is not an intentional and deliberate act on the part of an individual, but instead is something that takes place without conscious intent. The individual thus may not be aware of the extent to which identification influences his actions. A second characteristic is that identification has emotional connotations. Freud wrote that "emotional ties constitute the essence of the group mind" and that the manifestations of existing identifications result among other things in a "person limiting his aggressiveness towards those with whom he has identified himself, and in his sparing them and giving them help."<sup>4</sup>

Eight evidences of identification have been readily recognizable in the Oregon Extension Service, and it is not uncommon to see all eight displayed by one person.

1. An emotional desire to advance the specialized phase of work with which identified.
2. An emotional response to protect the specialized phase of work against attack or criticism.
3. A friendly attitude toward members of the specialized group.
4. A suspicious or hostile attitude toward non-members.
5. Resistance to extending own efforts outside the group.
6. Resistance to receiving advice or assistance from certain out-groups.
7. Categorizing authority as "legitimate" or "illegitimate" according to its group identification significance.
8. A tendency to make decisions on the basis of their consequences for the group with which identified if the interests of that group are involved.

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<sup>3</sup>Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior*, p. 205, New York: Macmillan & Co. 1947.

<sup>4</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 70 (Authorized translation by James Strachey), Vienna: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922.

This is not to say that the staff is seething with internal frictions. The relationships between individuals of different specialized lines are friendly and morale is high. Perhaps the explanation for this seeming contradiction is the fact that the various individuals have built up their pattern of expectations regarding their own action and that of other people to conform with known identifications. Friction arises only when these expectations are violated, or when an issue evolves that is not covered by established understanding. Integration tends to create such an issue.

Identification with the specialized lines of work do not appear to play a major part in determining informal social groupings. There are many examples of off-duty social associations that mix people from various phases of Extension work with each other and with people from other organizations and agencies.

The surprising aspect of the identification problem is the fact that individual agents in a county office tend to identify with the specialized phase of work they represent rather than identifying with each other as a county staff. This takes place despite the fact that they usually are officed in contiguous rooms, often share common secretarial service, and usually see and visit with each other much more frequently than they are in contact with other personnel from their own specialized fields.

It should also be mentioned that individuals differ both in the strength and in the breadth of their identifications. Some apparently identify strongly with the Extension Service as a whole even though employed in one of the specialized fields. A few individuals share responsibilities for two specialized phases of work and apparently are happy, though they sometimes are disturbed by conflicting pressures. Identification is not a barrier to changing from one phase of the work to another, as numerous employees have done so over a period of years. In this case, the person soon acquires an identification with the new group but retains also a sympathetic attitude toward the old. If conflict between the two groups arises, the tie with the current group is likely to be the stronger--although the person is likely to try to resolve the conflict rather than prolong it.

Administrative personnel responsible for all phases of work are likely to identify strongly with the Extension Service as a whole and to be impatient with the difficulties that arise from the conflicting identifications of others. The administrative head of one of the three lines of work, however, is likely to identify with that group rather than the overhead organization.

As so aptly stated by Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson, "For most persons, the loyalty to the working group is stronger than the loyalty to the larger units, and they usually will resist strongly the admission, even to themselves, that what is good for the working group is not always good for the organization as a whole."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson, op. cit., p. 96.



### The Basis for Change

It is not the purpose of this paper to explore the details of the psychological basis for the identification of an individual with a group. The evidences cited are, of course, merely expressions or visible symptoms of a condition. It is not a pathological condition but one which arises normally in individuals in an organization of this kind. It obviously is a condition that is built up through experience. And since it arises through experience, it presumably can be changed through a different type of experience.

Four factors in the experience of Extension workers apparently have played a part in creating their identifications:

1. The orientation of the individual (attitudes, habits, knowledge, and viewpoints acquired from previous experience as influenced by personal temperament).
2. The influences of the group in which employed (objectives, value standards, group expectations, and group acceptance or rejection).
3. The influence of the leader of the group (ideals personified, actions rewarded or punished, expectations expressed).
4. The interaction experience (association) of the individual with others inside and outside the group.

The task of modifying or broadening identifications becomes one of influencing these same factors in such a way as to produce a different result. In so doing, the administrator has available assorted means for influencing the experience of individual members of the staff. Changes in group values and the influences of the group upon the individual presumably must begin with the leader and with the individuals in the group, or with the situation in which the group is placed.

The problem which arises in this connection is the fact that a narrow identification tends to perpetuate the same kinds of limited experiences that created it and to resist mutual efforts that might lead to broader identification. The dilemma is not insoluble, but it again points up the fact that integration will require time and patience.

The principles for a program of action to broaden identifications in an agency such as the Oregon Extension Service might be stated as follows:

1. Recognition of the problem of identification itself.
2. Recognition of mutual goals that involve all the groups concerned.
3. Joint work on mutual problems.
4. Administrative and supervisory support for integrated efforts, including reward and recognition for such efforts.
5. Decision-making on a basis of efficiency rather than adequacy.

6. Communication outside of specialized field for those whose identifications are to be broadened.

7. Facilitating varied experience and associations for those whose identifications are to be broadened.

The atmosphere in which these principles are applied also could affect the results. Two conditions would seem to be essential prerequisites for successful attempts to integrate Extension work. One is equality of treatment for all groups of the staff in such matters as salary, status, and opportunity. The second is democracy in making major changes in organization or procedure.



## PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The preceding analysis indicates that no single simple step that could be taken by the administration of the Oregon Extension Service would by itself be the answer to the problem of integration. A combination of measures over a period of time would appear to be necessary. The following items are suggested as logical possibilities, with the full recognition that circumstances within the organization must determine which steps are practicable at any given time. The ultimate objective of integration is improved service to the people of the State of Oregon. It would be pointless to integrate at the cost of serious impairment of service.

### I. Face the Problem

Bring the problem of integration into the open for frank discussion by the staff, beginning with the personnel at the State headquarters. One purpose of this step would be to familiarize the staff members with the phenomenon of identification, which is largely an unconscious item at present. This approach also would enlist the initiative of the staff members in devising solutions to the problem rather than depending upon pressure from the top to accomplish the necessary changes.

It probably would be desirable to undertake this step in connection with the next suggestion, to which it is closely related. Discussion of identification should be less threatening to individual staff members if coupled with a constructive study of objectives. Also, the interests of economy would dictate combinations of measures where feasible.

Some exploratory attempts will be necessary to discover the best ways to accomplish this. Group discussion in reasonably small groups would appear to be logical and necessary at some stage in the process.

### II. Clarify Objectives

Draw up with the staff a statement of Extension Service objectives that represents a single goal for all three phases of work, and repeatedly emphasize this goal to all members of the staff. The purpose of this move, of course, would be to transfer staff loyalties from the goals of the subunits to the more inclusive goals of the larger unit.

One promising starting point for action of this kind is provided by the public relations platform for the Cooperative Extension Service.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations, op. cit., Part III, pp. 23-26.

This platform specifies three basic objectives for Extension work and then propounds 14 "planks" concerning attitudes toward the public welfare; rural welfare; rural people; urban people; parent institutions; cooperating agencies, organizations, and communication channels; toward and among staff members; and toward volunteer leaders.

The three basic objectives are:

- "1. To contribute to the individual development and collective welfare of rural people. (This includes helping farm people to make adjustments to meet changing economic and social conditions and technological developments.)
2. To aid in the efficient production and distribution of food and fiber for the Nation's needs.
3. To aid in maintaining and increasing the productive capacity of the Nation's soils and the wise use of water resources."<sup>7</sup>

The Oregon staff is not likely to arrive at a listing of objectives that will be radically different from or in conflict with those agreed upon by this national committee. But the experience of developing a statement of their objectives would be an educative one for the staff. It is suggested also that the county planning council might well be involved at some stage in the process, as the experience of clarifying Extension objectives might contribute also to some clarification in the minds of the council members as to the purposes of these advisory groups.

### III. Try New Programs

Encourage educational undertakings of a type that require integrated effort (problem approach) rather than segregated or divided effort, and deliberately praise staff members for accomplishments in such integrated activities.

Many writers could be cited in support of this recommendation. John Dewey, for example, stated that "The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>John Dewey, Experience and Education, pp. 26-27. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1952.

Elton Mayo expresses Quesnay's doctrine that "if a number of individuals work together to achieve a common purpose, a harmony of interests will develop among them to which individual self-interest will be subordinated."<sup>9</sup>

Herbert Simon observed that "loyalty to the larger group will result when loyalty to that group is rewarded even in conflict with loyalty to the smaller group."<sup>10</sup>

The idea of accomplishing integration by practicing integrated activities may be easier to accept than to apply. Considerable ingenuity may be required in visualizing opportunities for integrated undertakings, as experience may not provide a large number of illustrations. If all members of the staff are consciously seeking such opportunities, the likelihood of progress will be greater than if the process depends entirely upon administrative initiative.

An earlier section of this paper listed several examples of opportunities for integrated action. Viewed in a different way these could be classified as situations and as subjects.

Specific examples of situations that would seem particularly suited to an integrated approach include:

1. General farm organization meetings (Grange, Farm Bureau, Farmers' Union) because these usually are family affairs.
2. Meetings of parents of 4-H members on some occasion as 4-H meeting.
3. Mixed meetings of farm and town groups.
4. Radio and TV broadcasts during family listening or viewing hours.
5. Counseling individual farm families on broad questions of farm and home management.
6. Special study groups on joint-interest topics.

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<sup>9</sup>E. Mayo, The Political Problem of an Industrial Civilization, p. 21. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, 1947.

<sup>10</sup>Simon, op. cit., p. 216.



Specific examples of subjects that would seem particularly suited to an integrated approach include:

1. Safety (farm, home, and highway).
2. Health (particularly such aspects as hospitals, prepayment plans, public health services, securing doctor and dentist services for the community, recruitment of student nurses, etc.).
3. Balanced farming.
4. Public policy (farm production control, farm price support, public power, the United Nations).
5. Community improvement (telephones, garbage disposal, rural church, roads).
6. Recreation.
7. Soil and water conservation (some aspects, not technical details of practices).
8. Rural-urban understanding.
9. Leader training in leadership techniques and principles (group dynamics, public speaking, organizations, human relations).

It is obvious that integrated activities would be facilitated and encouraged by development of common program objectives through county planning councils. In fact, it seems safe to say that integration will not be successful in the long run unless it implements programs that are developed through these councils and also that the councils will not be successful unless they can accomplish program integration. If the program is not to be integrated, there is no need for integrating the advisory groups.

Integrated activities would be facilitated and encouraged by integration in some of the routine operating procedures, such as plans of work and annual reports.

County Extension agents will need friendly and constructive guidance to develop an understanding of what to do and how to do it if their initial attempts at integrated activities are to be successful. The necessity for agent training must be recognized and time allowed for that purpose. A good job in a few areas would represent a better start than haphazard attempts on a wider scale.

#### IV. Encourage Staff Shifts

Transfer staff members from one phase of the program to another where and when there are feasible opportunities for doing so.<sup>11</sup>

There are obvious practical limitations to this device, since male and female Extension agents are not interchangeable. However, it sometimes is possible to shift a man or a woman from 4-H Club work to adult work, or vice versa. Shifts of this type might well be encouraged rather than discouraged. This is not to say that any member of the staff should be forced from one line of work to another against his own will, nor that every member of the staff should be shifted at prescribed intervals. The principle involved is merely that transferring a person from one group to another is a means of broadening identifications, and that if there are a number of people throughout the staff who have had this experience it will be a helpful influence toward broadening the identifications of others.

Somewhat similar results might be obtained by division of responsibilities among the members of a county Extension staff. For example, a male 4-H Club agent might be given responsibility for leadership in one phase of the adult agricultural program, and one of the agricultural agents might in exchange take over leadership of one phase of the 4-H activity. Thus a 4-H agent who was trained in dairying might assume leadership in the adult dairy program, and an agricultural agent trained in crops might handle the 4-H crops projects as well as the adult work in that field. There obviously would be supervisory problems in such an arrangement unless it were agreed upon by all those concerned.

The present practice of using specialists in agriculture and home economics to prepare 4-H project bulletins would seem desirable because it contributes to broadening of identifications.

#### V. Study Office Arrangement

Arrange contiguous or reasonably adjacent offices for those staff members whose identification with common effort is to be strengthened and encouraged.<sup>12</sup>

As most Oregon counties already have achieved consolidated officing of county Extension agents, little change is thus suggested there. At the State level, however, this principle would presumably mean that supervisory personnel should be officed together as teams rather than being separately officed with other personnel of the specialized programs with which they are affiliated. Some shifts in specialist offices might be indicated.

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<sup>11</sup>Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

It would seem more feasible to apply this principle when new personnel are being added or when some type of reorganization is taking place than to make it the sole reason for playing "fruit basket upset." Otherwise, resistance to the moves might offset the advantages to be gained from them.

Incidentally, the Social Sciences Building on the University of Chicago campus provides an example of allocation of office space to promote inter-disciplinary relationships. The system apparently has worked satisfactorily over a period of years.

#### VI. Study Decision-Making

Evaluate the present organization structure in terms of the location of decision-making functions in relation to the identifications of the staff members concerned.<sup>13</sup> So far as feasible, decisions involving two or more phases of the work should be made by someone responsible for both phases or for neither.

The allocation of home economics specialist time between adult and youth work provides an example of current Oregon practice which violates this principle. The decision as to the amount of specialist time to be allocated for home economics in 4-H work rests with the State Home Demonstration Leader, though she has no responsibility for 4-H Club work. The State Club Leader, who is responsible for 4-H, has no control over the specialists. The solution apparently would be to transfer the control of home economics specialist time allocations to the administrative headquarters (where responsibility for both 4-H and home economics work is lodged), or to employ a separate crew of specialists for 4-H work and place them under the jurisdiction of the State Club Leader. A third alternative, of course, would be to give the State Home Demonstration Leader responsibility for 4-H Club work in home economics.

The allocation of agricultural specialist time between adult and youth work likewise should be made by someone whose primary identification is not with one of the two lines, assuming that the employment of a duplicate crew of specialists for 4-H Club work is impractical.

The proper place for specialists in the general field of the social sciences likewise deserves investigation in this connection, as it seems probable that work in this area might be expanded in the years ahead. Specialists in sociology, health, and human relations, for example, might logically be used to advantage in both adult and youth work and with both sexes.

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<sup>13</sup>Simon, op. cit., p. 215.



In all three kinds of cases involving specialists, the question of identification is significant in two ways:

1. The individual's conception of his or her proper field of responsibility will be affected by whether identification is broad or narrow.
2. The attitude of other staff members toward the specialist will be colored by their own identifications in relation to what they consider the specialist's role to be. Thus an agent whose identifications are with one field may resist advice from a specialist who in the agent's mind is identified with another field.

The proper responsibilities for the agent designated as chairman of the county staff would also seem appropriate for consideration here. To the extent that this chairman can be visualized as carrying responsibility for all phases of Extension work in the county, it would be logical that decision-making responsibility be lodged in that person. Presumably, the identifications of the county staff as a team can be strengthened in this manner. There are practical limitations governing where and to what degree this type of administrative decentralization is feasible. On the other hand, it is apparent that when responsibility for many decisions affecting each of the three lines of work rests at separate points outside the county, the tendency is to strengthen the identification of the individual agents with their State office counterparts and weaken their mutual identifications as a team.

When county Extension staffs reach such size that the chairmanship function is a full-size responsibility, some of the present problems should disappear. Counties are now at the awkward stage, like a small school with a part-time principal who also teaches.

Plans are presently being considered for consolidating supervisory functions for the three lines of work in the hands of two-person teams (a man and a woman), with each team responsible for a specified district (group of counties). This is logical as a step in decentralization and coordination. It suggests problems in determining the limits of the decision-making powers of these teams and their relationship to State leaders and specialists.

## VII. Expand Communications

See that all staff members receive some communications pertaining to other fields of Extension work in addition to their own specialized phase. Emphasize integration of program in a series of communications over a period of time.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson, op. cit., p. 235: "The frame of reference of a recipient will color his interpretation of any particular communication. Conversely, the communications he receives over a period of time will alter his frame of reference. In particular, the frame of reference can often be broadened by communicating many things that are not immediately essential to the action of the recipients."

The occasional letters to the staff that are now issued by the Associate Director and are commonly known as the "green sheet" are an excellent device and certainly should be continued. Their great virtue is the fact that they deal with all phases of Extension work and emphasize mutual interests.

Wider distribution among the staff of certain communications issued by persons responsible for specialized phases of the work would seem desirable. As a specific example, circular letters issued by the State Club Leader normally have been distributed only to agents responsible for 4-H Club work and to specialists more or less directly involved in the projects or activities concerned. It would be desirable to distribute some of these letters to agents, specialists, and administrative personnel not directly involved. Similarly, letters from the State Home Demonstration Leader seldom are seen by male specialists, agents, or administrators; and few agricultural communications are regularly distributed to female Extension personnel. Though paper consumption and clerical expense would be somewhat increased by enlarging the distribution of such items, dividends in improved understanding and broadened identifications should make the investment worthwhile.

This subject is significant in two ways. Communication is one device for broadening identifications; while identification is a phenomenon that tends to restrict communication. In the Extension Service, for some reason, communications pertaining to the group with which one is identified are likely to be regarded as of a semi-private nature and unsuited for dissemination outside that group, especially if there is a possibility that the reaction may be critical. In a sense, restricting communication outside the group is a means of protecting the group.

The greatest practical handicap to the use of communications for broadening identifications is the already large volume of mail that the individual Extension worker is expected to read daily. The pressure of practical requirements necessarily means that a considerable amount of this mail is hastily consigned to the wastebasket after only scant attention by the recipient. Thus, common sense will have to dictate limits to the use of this device. In the final analysis, however, it probably is better to waste some paper than to fail to communicate.

#### VIII. Establish Joint Committees

Mary Parker Follett stated that "Organization should have for one of its chief aims to provide for joint responsibility in those cases where combined knowledge is necessary for the best judgment."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Mary Parker Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 157. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1942.



One means for implementing this principle in an Extension Service is to establish joint committees of staff members to be responsible for various unified undertakings. This practice already is well established in Oregon and is readily accepted by the staff. There still are additional opportunities for using it, and expanding the practice would be desirable.

Examples of committees that have functioned in recent years include farm safety, health, public relations, motion pictures, publications distribution, and pasture improvement--to name only a few. Additional subjects that would seem appropriate for appointment of committees include balanced farming, part-time farming, teen-age 4-H program, rural-urban relations, community improvement, and public policy.

In the past, most of these joint committees have had advisory responsibilities rather than administrative responsibilities. They have drawn up recommendations that somebody else carried out. Examples of exceptions include the motion picture board of review, which allocates money for films from a fund placed at its disposal, and the farm safety committee, which plans Extension educational activities in this field and assigns responsibility for handling them. In future instances it might be desirable to give joint committees somewhat more authority and responsibility than some of them have in the past carried. So doing would make the committee assignment more definitely a part of the official obligations of the members.

From the viewpoint of identifications of staff members, joint committees have two effects. One is to broaden the identification of those who serve on the committee; the other is to label the program produced by the committee as being acceptable to the lines of work represented. There is, of course, the danger that if committee members feel strongly obligated to the groups they represent, they may not be able to achieve a common viewpoint. The best results that a committee could accomplish under such circumstances might be a compromise. This merely emphasizes the necessity of creating the committee in such a manner that its members all feel that they represent the Extension Service as a whole and are responsible to the Extension Service as a whole.

#### IX. Locate Natural Leaders

It is suggested that particular attention be given to locating and orienting the natural leaders among the staff, whose opinions will substantially influence their fellow workers.

This technique is used by the Associate Director in his practice of calling in a designated group of "senior" county agents for consultation from time to time. The agents in this group are generally regarded by their co-workers as being elder statesmen who achieved their long tenure and professorial rank because of ability. The fact that no 4-H Club agents and no women agents are included in this group may be a disadvantage. Presumably the leaders among the women agents are primarily influenced by the State Home Demonstration Leader and those among the 4-H agents by the State Club Leader. If all agents are expected to take an interest in all phases of program and feel some personal responsibility for the success of the undertaking as a whole, then presumably the leaders among all three groups should be consulted on broad policy matters.

### X. Involve Other Agencies

There are several other adult education agencies operating in Oregon that have some degree of common interest with the Extension Service. Two that deserve particular mention are the State Department of Vocational Education and the General Extension Division of the State System of Higher Education. There may well be opportunity for developing some collaborative activities with both of these agencies that would be mutually beneficial. An incidental by-product might be some contribution to Extension Service unity.

Vocational agriculture and vocational home economics in high schools already compete with 4-H Club work. Vocational agriculture teachers have begun in some cases to schedule evening classes for adults. The challenge now facing the Extension Service is how to develop a constructive program of cooperation with this competitor. The teaching task is great enough to use fully the skills and resources of both groups.

The General Extension Division has shared in the financing of two projects with the Extension Service for a considerable time. The Dean of that division has on several occasions expressed interest in developing other cooperative activities. A logical field for such collaboration would be the training of volunteer lay leaders in the principles and skills of leadership. An undertaking of this type would need to be tried out in a limited area to test its practicability. The trial would be worth the effort because of the vast possibilities such an undertaking affords. In addition to the large number of lay leaders in the organizations with which the Extension Service deals directly, there are very great numbers in other organizations--both rural and urban. There is reason to believe that many of these people--from all types of organizations--would be interested in a course of study on leadership, and that they could successfully be taught in mixed groups.

The function of the General Extension Division in such an undertaking would be to provide the instructor and the necessary materials. The Extension Service could recruit students among the leaders with whom it works and aid in giving the program general publicity.

In some areas of the State, there undoubtedly are numerous other adult education enterprises in operation that deserve attention from the Extension Service. In some cases, these are agencies offering instruction in fields which Extension does not attempt to cover. Great books discussion groups would be an example. It is in keeping with the traditional conception of the Extension Service role that this agency bring to the attention of the people it serves the kinds of assistance available from other sources.

In other cases, there are adult education agencies that might be actively helpful in promoting Extension Service programs. For example, a local library might be willing to stage a special display of books on a given topic as part of an Extension campaign or provide space for a 4-H Club display in connection with National 4-H Club Week.



## XI. Broaden Identification of Lay Leaders

Extension means many different things to different people because it is better known by parts than as a whole. Leaders of 4-H Clubs think of Extension work primarily in that connection; rural women are primarily aware of it as represented by community home Extension units; and farm men know the organization best as a source of technical information on problems relating to crops, soils, livestock, etc. This is a natural and logical consequence of the long-established pattern of operation, and is largely unavoidable. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for broadening the understanding of rural people concerning this agency, and there would be advantages in so doing.

For example, a newsletter now is being distributed to all 4-H Club leaders at regular intervals in which some information might be included from time to time concerning other aspects of Extension work that should be of interest to these leaders. Similarly, a newsletter is published periodically by the State Home Economics Extension Council that might be a vehicle for some material relating to agricultural and 4-H Club work. And there are numerous periodicals in various phases of agriculture that could afford to give some explanation of the significance of the work being done with women and children.

There is an evident tendency among some rural men to regard agricultural education as the only sound justification for local appropriations to support Extension work, with funds for the other two lines being considered as luxuries that can be afforded in periods of prosperity. Some ardent supporters of 4-H Club activities apparently feel just as strongly that only work with youth is really necessary and that the other items could be dispensed with if times became tough. The idea has not become generally accepted that a balanced program of Extension education must include all three phases and that the three together can accomplish results greater than the sum of the parts.

As the identifications of Extension staff members are broadened through activities of the various types suggested in this paper, there should be a natural tendency for this influence to spread from the staff members to the lay people with whom they work. On the other hand, the narrow identifications of some lay leader groups may serve to retard any change on the part of the staff member concerned. It is suggested, therefore, that some attention be given to broadening the viewpoint of lay leaders.

## XII. Maintain Mixed Meetings

The practice of requiring weekly staff meetings in each county having several agents is a desirable device well worth continuing. It would seem logical that these meetings would be ideal occasions for developing ideas for integrated activities. Such a development might come about quite naturally if desirability of undertaking integrated activities is accepted by the staff as the result of other steps suggested in this paper. Even though relatively few joint projects have been produced

through these county staff meetings thus far, the increased understanding of each other's programs developed by the agents and their recognition of the fact that periodic consultation on matters of mutual concern is necessary have undoubtedly justified the effort.

The practice of holding monthly meetings of the State staff also is in keeping with the principles of broadening identifications and promoting program integration. The fact that the State staff meeting is preceded by an informal coffee period has added greatly to its value in promoting better personal acquaintanceship between staff members in different fields. The fact that this monthly meeting continues to hold staff interest is in itself strong evidence of its value.

The separate monthly meetings of the agricultural specialists and the home economics specialists that also are held would appear to serve a necessary purpose and deserve being continued. Definite arrangements should be made to insure that 4-H Club personnel are regularly invited to these specialist sessions. Though the agricultural specialists take pride in the fact that theirs is a "stag" session and have indicated they do not wish female participation, there would be value in occasional joint sessions of the two groups for discussion of specialist responsibilities. They do have interests in common despite the difference in their subject matter fields--as experience in several joint committees has shown.

### XIII. Coordinate Training of Agents

Agent training activities usually are classified in three types--preservice, induction, and inservice. The major preservice training device used in Oregon is an undergraduate course in "Extension Methods" taught at Oregon State College one quarter each year. It is open to both men and women and covers all phases of Extension work. Such a course logically gives the students a broader orientation than would be provided by separate specialized courses in agricultural Extension work, home economics Extension work, and 4-H Club work. For that reason, it is recommended that the combined course be continued.

Even more important than this preservice training, however, is the type of induction training undergone by new agents at the time of employment. Many of the new agents employed are not graduates of Oregon State College, some of those who are graduates of this institution have not taken the "Extension Methods" course, and those who have taken the course may have had only an academic interest in the subject at the time they were enrolled. First impressions on a new job can be highly important in determining continuing attitudes toward the work, thus it appears logical that induction training should be designed to implant desired attitudes so far as feasible.



Induction training of new agents has not been a rigidly standardized procedure because of wide variation in the urgency of placing the new employees in a county and also because of wide variation in the previous experience of new employees. In general, an employee without previous Extension experience is given some systematic training before being permanently placed, and an employee with previous experience in another State is given training also if time permits. But in either case, the amount of training given often depends more upon the time available than upon other factors.

Induction training usually has been completely separate for men agents and women agents, and the training of newly employed 4-H Club agents often has been separate from those who will work with the adult program. It is imperative that the induction training of a new employee cover specifically the responsibilities of the particular position in which that person is to start work, so considerable separation is inevitable. On the other hand, it seems essential that certain common information be included in the induction training of all new agents, and it seems desirable that such common training be given in mixed groups where feasible.

It is, therefore, suggested that a common core of topics be developed for inclusion in the induction training of all new agents and that trials be made to see if such common training can successfully be given in mixed groups.

The desirability of combining inservice training activities for all types of agents has been emphasized previously and need not be repeated here.

#### XIV. Use Specialist Influence

The principal function of a subject matter specialist is to provide technical knowledge in a particular field to aid the county Extension agent in meeting problems in that field. An additional function that the specialist naturally and inevitably performs is that of influencing agent attitudes. There are more specialists than supervisors and it consequently follows that agents have more contact with specialists than with supervisors. Specialist influence may be fully as potent as that of supervisory personnel in encouraging or discouraging program integration.

Rowland Egger of the University of Virginia has been overheard to comment that "the specialist goes to the county armed with the authority of ideas, which sometimes is more authority than the supervisor carries."

Earlier recommendations in this paper visualize the broadening of specialist identifications along with those of other members of the staff. The point is re-emphasized here because of its importance.

It is natural and logical that a good specialist believes his or her specialty to be the most important single subject with which Extension deals. But it should not be too much to hope that the specialist also can come to see that vital topic as part of a larger whole and to see that the specialty benefits as the entire Extension operation is improved.

To the extent that specialists can be influenced to identify with the Extension Service as a whole, their influence can in turn be a powerful factor toward broadening identifications elsewhere in the organization.

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